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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 099182

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2018
TAGS: AF MARR MOPS NATO PREL
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE: REVISED CIV-MIL CELL CONCEPT FOR
REGIONAL COMMAND - SOUTH PARTNERS

REF: STATE 85097

Classified By: Acting DAS Nerissa Cook for reasons 1.4(b,d)

11. (C) This is an action cable, see para 3.

12. (C) BACKGROUND: On September 13, 2008, the Deputies Committee endorsed the circulation of a revised concept paper among Allies and Partners with troops in Regional Command - South in Afghanistan, which outlines a proposed Civil-Military Planning and Coordination Cell. Posts delivered to Capitals an earlier version of the concept paper (reftel) on or after August 7. Based on responses from Posts and the results of a Defense Department survey team trip to Afghanistan in August, Washington has modified the concept paper and now seeks further Allied and Partner input. Additionally, Secretary Gates will likely raise this issue on the margins of the NATO Defense Ministerial scheduled for September 18-19.

13. (SBU) ACTION: Posts should draw from the points below while delivering the accompanying revised non-paper to appropriate officials in the capitals of Regional Command - South Allies and Partners. Posts should report demarche responses slugged to EUR/RPM Raphael Carland and SCA/A Tom Reott no later than Wednesday, October 1, 2008.

BEGIN TALKING POINTS

-- We strongly support the creation of a Civil-Military Planning and Coordination Cell at Regional Command - South Headquarters and hope our Allies and Partners can support this concept as well.

-- We appreciate the valuable comments that Regional Command - South Allies and Partners have provided in response to our initial proposal. Many of these ideas have been incorporated into the revised non-paper, and we believe they have strengthened the concept.

-- We believe it is important to move quickly, however, and we would like to achieve consensus among Regional Command - South contributors on the concept by October 1 in order for the Civil-Military Cell to begin operating in some capacity by November 1, 2008.

-- The U.S. will provide civilian personnel to serve in

the cell, initially through temporary measures, although our intent is to find a long-term solution. In order to get the cell up and running, however, we urge Allies and Partners to be creative in identifying and deploying civilians to the cell by the November target date.

-- We would also encourage Allies and Partners to be flexible in their initial impressions of the cell, allowing commanders and personnel in the field the latitude to find the best location and precise duties for the cell in Regional Command - South Headquarters.

-- We draw Allies' and Partners' attention particularly to the new concept of a "steering group" composed of, among others, senior personnel from Regional Command - South Headquarters, the Provincial Task Forces, and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. We believe a "steering group" would provide both effective regional coordination and ensure that provincial perspectives are taken into account at the senior level.

-- Secretary Gates is likely to discuss this revised non-paper with fellow Regional Command - South Defense Ministers on the margins of the London NATO Defense Ministerial, held September 18-19.

BEGIN NON-PAPER

RC South Regional Planning & Coordination Cell
(REVISED DRAFT Concept Paper)

Many of the challenges in Southern Afghanistan are local in effect but regional in scope. Examples include: delivering freedom of movement across the ring route, power generation and counter-narcotics. All operations and activities must therefore be viewed both comprehensively (how reconstruction, governance and security achieve an overall effect) as well as through the lens of regional impacts.

-- Southern Provincial Reconstruction Teams deliver comprehensive effects in key districts in their provinces. However, we must begin stitching together their good work to deliver regional stability.

In order to facilitate this regional comprehensive approach, COM RC South requires staff (at the O5 or O6 civilian equivalent level) with reconstruction and governance expertise to shape components of regional operations plans pertaining to military support to governance building, development and reconstruction in Southern Afghanistan.

-- Staff should be responsible for ensuring military compliance with overarching strategy documents, including the Afghan National Development Strategy. Staff should be focused on planning that is regional in nature.

Related, the advice and expertise of senior civilians (at the 1 and 2-star level) and other key actors in Southern Afghanistan must be more integrated into regional-level planning. Without these more senior-level inputs, an RC-South civilian-military planning team will not be as capable of synchronizing RC-South plans with developments in the provinces and districts. As such, convening a senior-level "steering group" will help ensure all components of RC-South plans bolster activities in the Provinces - and are fully synchronized with national-level guidance.

Recommended Way Ahead (Two Parts):

Part One. Augment RC-S HQ with a group of individuals that have governance, reconstruction, strategic communications, and development planning expertise (3-4 individuals from several RC-South nations is sufficient for an initial operating capability, building towards an

eventual full operating capability of 6-7 personnel). Individuals in this cell should be at the O-5 or O-6 civilian equivalent level. This group should support RC-S problem analysis, planning, conduct and outcomes assessment of fully integrated "comprehensive" operations. This will result in greater civilian input into military activities in the region, rather than RC-South HQ "directing" civilian activities. Through the normal reporting chain, the planning cell should be responsible to COM RC-S. In short, this is a commitment of at least one individual per RC-South nation. In so doing, this group should:

-- Coordinating with civilian-military actors in RC-South, provide status reports to capitals on implementation of the RC-South campaign plan and Campaign Implementation Plan (per instruction in the RC-South Campaign Implementation Plan).

-- Facilitate sharing of information and exchanging best practices and lessons learned among actors in Southern Afghanistan. (As a possible component of this work stream, several Allies indicated an interest in bolstering RC-South's capability to analyze political and tribal dynamics).

-- Facilitate GIROA outreach - and support - to Provincial and District Leadership.

-- Request GIROA and international community support and backing for integrated regional governance, reconstruction and development priorities.

Part Two. Related, COM RC-South should host regular meetings of those PRT/Task Force senior civilians, Task Force commanders and headquarters staff already in theater to facilitate cross-provincial and cross-sectoral coordination (per the RC-South Campaign Implementation Plan). Individuals sitting on this steering group should be at the 1 or 2- star level. In short, this is not additional personnel beyond those committed to the civilian-military planning cell articulated in proposal one. Rather, it is a commitment of in theater Senior Civilians' time.

-- The overall focus of this "Steering Group" - should be to provide inputs to governance building, reconstruction, and development components of RC-South plans and activities.

-- This group should help identify regional priorities, and, where possible, allocate resources to bolster existing programs and/or establish programs where there are none (and have been identified as a key requirement).

-- UNAMA and the Government of Afghanistan (at minimum an IDLG representative) should be invited to participate.

-- Consulting with key actors in RC-South, the coordination and planning cell should be responsible for facilitating these meetings, including preparation of agendas, logistical support, etc.

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